3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FF13 Mbundu FF13

straight lines. The legs show the usual flexion of the knees and a shortening which is out of proportion to the body length. The lower limbs of most Angolan figures have these characteristics. The body of this figure is hollow and the head detachable. The incised head-dress is imitative of the coiffure of Vachokue women. 532

Cangamba, a village in eastern Angola, is a confluence of tribal elements, namely, Vambuella, Luchazi, Babunda, and Vachokue, whose physical appearance, hairdressing, tooth mutilation, and tribal marks differ considerably. The man who sold the figurine brought it furtively. He was an Ocimbundu, but the work is of Chokue origin. The figure, I am informed, was filled with medicine, [755] then placed near a patient who was undergoing curative treatment. 171

The figurine (*apere*) of a woman having a number of dark feathers attached to her back has only one use. A caravan setting out for a long journey is accompanied by a medicine-man whose outfit includes such a figurine. Should the caravan leader be in doubt when choosing between two paths, the medicine-man sets up the image at the parting of the ways. He kneels before it and asks questions, then plugs his nostrils in order to make replies in a falsetto voice supposed to come from the figurine. Thus advised respecting the route to follow, the caravan continues its journey (Plate XXI, Fig. 5; p. 156). 484 778 787

The wooden figure (Plate XXI, Fig. 3) is of exceptional interest because of its connection with the blacksmith's craft, which is associated with introductory rites for apprentices. In former days a newly initiated blacksmith was expected to disappear for a period during which he killed a man. On returning to the work of his forge the blacksmith made a wooden figure of which this example, one of five obtained, is typical. The spirit of the murdered man took up its abode in the effigy and in this way helped with the work. The figure, which is of the usual dimensions, namely, 36 cm high, has the greater part of its surface covered with reddened earth (pp. 159–160). 326 775

Two figurines (Plate XXI, Figs. 1, 6) were obtained from women of the Vachokue tribe in the village of Ngongo, Ngalangi. Here the Vachokue and the Ovimbundu mingle to such an extent that customs are no doubt transferred from one culture to the other. These wooden images are used by childless women, or by women whose infants have died. The woman who sold these figures pressed them to her breasts to show the manner of use. People standing around smiled and nodded their approval. A wooden figure of this kind is substituted for a dead twin. [945] 171 842

787 The handle of a hoe is the symbol of cultivation. The appearance of the miniature handle at the top of the basket implies that the spirit of a woman who was rich in corn is troubling the community.

Two united, human figures of wood indicate that a twin will die. The Ovimbundu welcome twins; when one is dead the mother has a wooden figure (Plate XXI, Fig. 1) made to take its place; this is nursed to induce another conception and to comfort the remaining child.

The little gourd means that a deceased person was secretly poisoned in revenge because of his thefts from a field.

The seed of the oil palm means that a large gourd of palm oil has been stolen.

The description of funeral rites gave an account of the questioning of the spirit of the deceased. If no answer is given, divination is made to learn the cause of death.

There is no divination by examination of entrails. Bones are thrown in playing a game, but this is not connected with divination.

EQUIPMENT AND MISCELLANEOUS DUTIES

755 [892] The basket of an Ocimbundu medicine-man at Caconda contained, in addition to the human bone, pounder, and hoe blades already mentioned, two carved wooden female figures whose specific use is unknown. It is known, however, that such figures may be nursed and held to the breast of a woman who wishes to conceive. There was a cowrie shell on a cord which forms a charm to be worn round the neck of a woman who desires children. A small tin box containing a coin and some stones was used for shaking. The kind of sound produced, also any arrested movement of the objects in the box, are indications of the guilt of a person whose name was mentioned just as the objects ceased to move.

A large antelope horn, filled with a mixture of goat's fat and charcoal from the bones of a goat, was intended for use in curing the sick. The contents of the horn become liquid when heated; then they can be dropped on the heads of the people who come for treatment. It was explained that a number of sick people sat around the medicine-man who walked to each person and poured out a small quantity of medicine on the patient's head.

[534] The only musical instruments used by a medicine-man are a small friction drum and a rattle. At Ngalangi I saw a medicine-man give a dance during which he slashed about him with a small ax, which was evidently a ceremonial object, since the construction

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FF13 Mbundu FF13

was too light to make it effective as a tool or weapon (Plate XIII, Fig. 4). At Bailundu I was informed that an ax of this kind is used in a medicine-man's dance which is intended to cure a man who is sick because a spirit has entered into him. The sickness may have occurred because the man has broken a promise. 755

The medicine-man, or sometimes the patient himself, dances violently, meanwhile cutting about him with the ax (esuinha), which is finally used for killing a little pig whose blood is drunk by the sick man. This is the ritual that was previously mentioned in describing divination.

The following are important ceremonial objects: The ax akuse (Plate XIII, Fig. 5) was the one used for killing slaves who were eaten at the death of a king. This object was secured in the Vaxile country near Vila Nova de Selles. It is of handsome appearance, having a copper circle inlaid into the iron blade. A spear from Bailundu is likewise important because of its use in ritual (Plate XIII, Fig. 8). Before war and hunting this spear was thrust first into an ox then into a slave. The human and animal flesh were cooked together and eaten from the same pot. The female figure used by the medicine-man for consultation with regard to the correct path for a caravan has been described. A carved wooden post obtained from Bailundu was set up at cross-paths so that it might be visited by a sick person or his representative who would make sacrifice there. 411 [266] 782

Without parallel among ceremonial objects used by the Ovimbundu is a small wooden cloth-covered box from Bailundu. This contains a piece of root of cylindrical form tightly bound with cloth having at one end a cowrie shell. The box is the shrine of *Kasandu*, for whom a small hut is built in order to contain the box. Any one who sees the contents of the shrine is said to become blind. *Kasandu* is believed to be the "spirit of dreaming who makes swellings come on the body." 779

Antelope horns are in general use as containers of magical potions. One horn from Bailundu is used for holding sweet beer which is drunk by a person afflicted by bad dreams. A large horn with a piece of fur attached, also from Bailundu, is named ocisdiko. The horn contains a mixture of fat and charcoal which is heated near camp after sunset, when men are on the march. The spreading fumes keep away lions and thieves. It was said that a thief is deterred because the fumes make him cough. 789 237

B. Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

778 The charm *ocunge* or *onkuiyu* is in the form of small neckbands of plaited fiber to which two or three cowrie shells are fastened. It is worn by women who wish to induce conception. A neckband of this kind which was worn by the maternal grandmother is thought to be specially effective. Sometimes a small rattle, formed from seed pods attached to a stick, is tied to the neckband. The rattle is shaken when the mother of twins meets a friend to whom she is not allowed to give the ordinary greeting.

751 A tortoise shell containing fat and charcoal is worn by the mother of a child who is afflicted by the spirit of *Kandanda*, which may cause the baby to have skin eruptions or a very small amount of hair. In order to cure her child, the mother must eat small quantities of the contents of the shell from time to time. In some sympathetic way the medicinal benefits are transferred to the infant.

756 When dancing, the medicine-man usually wears a goat's beard attached to a circular piece of basketry. This *ocolo* is sometimes fastened on the top of his head. In place of the ax already mentioned he may flourish a small ceremonial hoe or whisk, or a wooden baton with a tuft of hair at the end.

[766] Among the varied duties of the medicine-man is that of washing the body of a king (*ocoma*) or a chief (*sekulu*). To water in a pot, the medicine-man adds some of the blood of a freshly killed chicken. Then in a hut specially reserved for the purpose he performs the ceremonial ablution.

At Cangamba an Ocivokue performed a ceremony which was supposed to make a thief return to the village for trial. The medicine-man sat on his haunches, holding in one hand a small rattle and in the other a slender stick on which the decorated carapace of a tortoise was poised (Plate LXXXII, Fig. 1). Very earnestly the man talked, shook his head, and gazed at the tortoise shell which began to twist on its pivot. As the medicine-man muttered and shook his rattle, the movement of the shell grew faster. Presently the rotation of the tortoise shell was reversed, but so adroitly that I could not follow the movement or imitate it when allowed to try. The reversed movement of the carapace on its pivot represents the culprit turning back to his village.

CURING THE SICK

755 At Cangamba a female *osimbanda* was seen painting marks of red and white on the face of a sick woman. The ceremony was called *ovihamba* and its object was said to be the relief of rheumatism.

3: Hambly 8-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

of which there are several named varieties. Painting of women has previously been mentioned in describing ceremonies associated with pregnancy. 755

Several distinct performances for curing the sick were observed at Cangamba, which is a center of the Vachokue tribe, though a few people of the Ovimbundu and many Luchazi and Balunda mingle at this place.

In the first instance the sick woman knelt in front of a hut two feet high which contained a clay leopard marked with white spots. The medicine-man dipped a bunch of leaves in water and stroked this along the patient's spine from the neck to the sacrum.

The second performance was more elaborate, and detailed preparations were made outside the hut of the medicine-man (Plate LXXXIII, Fig. 2). A screen of posts and boughs was erected, and on one side of this two male drummers stood, each with a long tubular drum before him. On the other side of the fence were three wooden posts, each two feet high, circular in cross section, and painted, as indicated in the illustration. Near the posts was a basket, so closely woven that it contained water in which green twigs and leaves were soaking. The drums began to beat and a group of women clapped hands in rhythm.

The patient knelt before the small painted wooden posts close to the basket of water, into which she dipped her face from time to time. While the drum music and hand-clapping continued, the medicine-man took wet twigs from the basket. He drew these very slowly along the spine of the patient from neck to sacrum, as if painting with a brush. The patient occasionally shivered from head to foot; then remained still, except for the dipping of her face in the water, until the next paroxysm shook her. This routine continued for ten minutes. The medicine-man then knelt by the woman, dug a small hole in the ground, and pulled up one of the painted wooden posts which he placed in the patient's hands. The medicine-man kept his hands over those of the patient while she transferred the painted post to the new hole that he had prepared. Finally the basket containing the water and leaves was buried thirty feet from the scene of operations.

A similar ceremony was witnessed near this site. In this instance, however, the water was obtained from a boat-shaped receptacle mounted on two Y-shaped posts, at a height of three feet from the ground (Plate LXXXIII, Fig. 1). Outside the hut of the medicine-

3. Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP1

755 man, and fastened to the wall, was a strip of bark cloth painted with white circles. These recorded the number of times the patient came for treatment.

278 757 At Ngalangi there was no difficulty in obtaining information respecting plants used medicinally. Each of three medicine-men returned with a number of roots and stems which they readily described. *Okakumbo* and *okapeiyapolo* are roots that cure "big head." This disease, which is rare in white people, begins with blood blisters in the mouth; these may spread to the intestines and cause death. *Okapenje* is a root that induces vomiting; it is also a purgative to free a patient from worms. *Okatikitiki* is given to a woman soon after her baby is born. *Kalungulumono* is a plant having a purple flower. If the root is pounded and drunk in water it acts as an aperient. *Okumbiasoko*, when pounded and placed on the fire, restores a person after fainting; the head of the patient is held in the smoke. To a violent maniac the root *usonge* is given, pounded in water and mixed with maize beer. At Ngalangi a man who had been subject to homicidal mania was sitting on the ground quietly with his hands tied behind his back. I was informed that *usonge* was making him better. *Ociyeyesi* is a bark that is chewed to remedy stomachache. *Kosomba* is a plant used to cure people who fall into the fire; it is also a remedy for toothache. The action of this drug *kosomba* causes vomiting and evacuation.

Cilendalaka is pounded in water and smeared on the patient's body as a treatment following the internal application of *kosomba*. *Mbundakutaka* is a root that is pounded and applied externally to cure sores on the lips.

279 In addition to the plants just mentioned the following are important:

Ovimbinga. This plant, whose name means "the big horn," is probably *Strophanthus.* It is used in the treatment of worms and chest colds.

Ovipumbulu. This is a trailing herb whose leaves when pulverised are said to be a cure for bad sores.

Ovindimbulu and *ciuwawa.* These are used to give to women who are suffering in difficult delivery. *Ongolo* sometimes takes the place of these drugs. The bark of *ongolo* is pounded in boiling water which is contained in a basin over which the woman sits. Use of the bark in this way is a protection against injuries resulting from childbirth.

Ouwandalua. This is good for headaches and whooping cough. The roots are boiled and mixed with sweet beer.

Okalitolo-lokolo. This is said to be used in cases of dysentery. At Elundo it is used for curing skin diseases.

Okalie. This is used in cases of snake bite, swellings, and stings.

164 In connection with the foregoing study of the native pharmacopoeia it will be of interest to consider some maladies to which the Ovim-

S: Hambly E-5 (1929-30)1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

At Cacunda I obtained the basket of a medicine-man which contained 759
a human tibia, a hoe for digging in graves, and a round stone for pounding 791
the bone before mixing it with fat and charcoal. Medicine-men still make
potions for internal use, and these are usually carried in small horns sus-
pended round the neck, or the paste may be contained in the carapace of
a tortoise. In every way the medicine-man is still functioning, and his
tasks are fundamental to the social and religious life of the Ovimbundu.

At an early age children specialize in their play which has a bearing 868
on the business of life. Boys make wooden-tipped arrows, play at hunting,
and shoot at tubers which are rolled along the ground. Girls take clay from
the potters to fabricate their own small cooking pots, and young girls at-
tempt the coiling of basketry.

Men are the musicians, and among these a high degree of specialization 533
is observed. In a large village there are likely to be only a few competent
drummers, and only a few men who play the small iron-keyed instrument
called ocisanji. Osaka is a ritual game played only by men, and only when
a village headman or a king is dying. The ball (ombunje) is made by sewing 535
lizard skin over a hard spherical fruit about six centimeters in diameter. A 524
man continues to dance with this little ball clenched in his outstretched 755
hand, while another dancer hits the muscles of his arm to make him release
the ball. This game is thought to give strength to the sick man. There is
a transfer of the endurance of the dancers to the invalid.

Preliminary observation in some villages occupied by Ovimbundu is 197
disappointing in its suggestion of Europeanization. The foreign culture is,
however, a thin veneer, and further research shows a strong persistence of
indigenous custom and belief quite near to centers of Portuguese influence.

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

and pagans co-operate in weddings and funerals. In certain aspects of funeral rites, and in commemorations of ancestors the Christians participate, justifying themselves by arguing that they are purely social functions and have no religious significance. This differs from their attitude to the major exorcism rites,[4] which are avoided by Christians, who regard them with some horror, and towards consulting diviners. Although visiting diviners is strictly forbidden by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries, a high proportion of their people do this,[5] but clandestinely. Thus I was told that there were no diviners in Gumba; in fact, there were two living in Epalanga. It is important to remember that there exist nowadays no pagan 'congregations', that is, permanent groups associated with the performance of ritual.

It is, indeed, through the missions that most of the formal teaching of European culture (apart from the instructions given to labourers and servants) which Ovimbundu receive is given. To the Ovimbundu the missionaries are the Europeans who appear in the most favourable light, and even among pagans the attitude to the missions is without the fear accorded to the post or the suspicion with which the traders are regarded. The missionaries alone run schools, and they provide most of the modern medical services. The missionaries come into far more frequent contact with the people than do the *chefes*, and their relationship with the people is not confined to economics as is that of the traders. The Ovimbundu desire to imitate and learn from Europeans; it is from the missionaries that they have most opportunity of learning, and it is in the African clergy that they have the most clear evidence that this learning from Europeans will bring them results.

The organization of the missions is the form of large-scale social structure with which the people are best acquainted, and with which they are most capable of identifying themselves. A

[4] These involve drumming and an open invitation to anybody who wants to turn up. The idea is to persuade the tormenting spirit to pass into a small animal or inanimate object. The minor exorcism (*oku kutalila*) also involves sending the spirit into an inanimate object, but without drumming or the headshaking by the patient which is believed to mark the arrival of the spirit and his acceptance of the offering.

[5] Childs, loc. cit. Personal information.